

# Age 8

## Child Development

### Developmental Tasks

- To develop a sense of accomplishment, which centers around the ability to learn and apply skills, deal with peers, competition, self-control, and greater physical strength.
- To develop and test values and beliefs, which guide present and future behaviors.

### Indicators Related to Developmental Lag

- Excessive concerns about competition and performance, especially in school; extreme rebellion; teasing; whining; headaches, nervous stomach; ulcers; nervous tics; extreme procrastination; overdependence on caregivers for age-appropriate tasks, e.g., combing hair, going to the store, tying shoes, finding a restroom; social isolation; lack of friends and involvements; few interests; inappropriate relationships with "older" people, e.g., teenagers; stealing; pathological lying; bedwetting; fire-setting.

**Note:** Although these tasks and indicators may be present during ages 7 to 12, each may be more observable at specific times.

## Physical Development

Normal Characteristics	Suggested Behaviors for Effective Parenting
Is busy and active; has frequent accidents.	Sympathize and comfort.
Makes faces, wiggles, clowns.	Don't take it seriously.
May frequently urinate as a result of anxiety.	Be tolerant; it's not deliberate.
Has good appetite; wolfs down food; belches spontaneously; may accept new foods.	Except for belching, rejoice!
Has improved health with a few short illnesses.	Rejoice again.

## Intellectual Development

Normal Characteristics	Suggested Behaviors for Effective Parenting
Wants to know the reasons for things.	Answer questions patiently.
Often overestimates own ability; generalizes instances of failure with such statements as, "I never get anything right."	Direct child toward attempting what can be accomplished, but still provide challenges. Stress what the child has learned and not the end product.
Wants more information about pregnancy and birth; may question father's role.	Continue to be available to answer questions.

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## Social Development

Normal Characteristics	Suggested Behaviors for Effective Parenting
Demands love and understanding from mother.	Love and accept.
Makes new friends easily; works at establishing good two-way relationships; develops close friend of own sex. Considers clubs and groups important; enjoys school, doesn't like to be absent, and tends to talk more about it.	Assist with scouting or sport groups. Go to activities, such as his/her concerts. Be a part of his/her school life.
Is not interested in family table conversations; wants to finish meal in order to get to other business.	Remain understanding of child's needs and feelings.
May "peep" at each other and at parents. Tells dirty jokes, laughs, and giggles.	Do not overly focus on child's behavior. Set reasonable limits.

## Emotional Development

Normal Characteristics	Suggested Behaviors for Effective Parenting
Has more secrets.	Provide child with a locked box or drawer.
May be excessive in self-criticism; tends to dramatize everything; is very sensitive.	Do not criticize. Encourage efforts. Teach that others also make mistakes.
Has fewer and more reasonable fears.	Build on their confidences.
May argue and resist requests and instructions, but will obey eventually.	Keep directions simple; avoid "I already know" responses by not overdirecting.
Likes immediate rewards for behavior.	Provide small but meaningful rewards for accomplishments.
Is usually affectionate, helpful, cheerful, outgoing, and curious; can also be rude, selfish, bossy and demanding, giggly and silly.	Allow expression of negative emotions while maintaining limits. Be patient with giggling and accept humor.

## Moral Development

Normal Characteristics	Suggested Behaviors for Effective Parenting
May experience guilt and shame.	Acknowledge and support the child's standards and discuss reasonableness of child's expectations. Encourage the child to be self-forgiving. Focus on the worth of an individual rather than on behavior. Then work on changing the behavior.